

[p. 102a]

604 she simply did not go home except to visit. She said, simply, that her aunt fed and clothed her better than her parents and there was less work. The girl's parents fully approved the step; friendly, and possibly affectionate, relations continued.

602 *General behaviors.*—All more distant relatives are expected to take part in any "labor."

476 This refers not to ordinary activities, but to such affairs as a wedding, house moving, death, or *mayordomía*. For such affairs each family wishes to have as large a crowd as possible, for prestige values are involved. On such occasions the husband's relatives attend, but only the closer relatives (and the *compadres*) will ordinarily assist actively. The one exception is in a house moving where the husband's male relatives do all the labor. Relatives of the wife also are expected to attend all functions. The males do no labor, but the wife's female relatives assist in the cooking and serving. Attendance at such affairs is expected even of relatives so remote that they are not called by kinship terms. If they cannot come, they must send an adequate excuse (illness or business out of town alone are adequate) and send a small gift such as they would have brought had they attended. Failure to appear would cause bad feeling and refusal to attend "labors" of the offending relative. Roughly speaking, the obligation extends to anyone addressed or referred to as *primo* or *prima* and to any children or parents of such persons. It also extends to all *compadres* and their children.

574 Another occasion in which kinship obligations are apparent is when a family returns to the town after a long absence. Then all the relatives and friends come and spend a day with the family (usually at the house of a close relative). There are also many invitations to meals. Augustín said when his family returned to Cherán he ate scarcely a meal at home for several weeks.

THE COMPADRE SYSTEM

608 Fully as important as kinship in Cherán is the system of *compadrazgo*. Ordinarily this could be translated as simply the godparent system, but at Cherán the relations between parents and godparents are often as important as those between godparents and children and

[p.102b]

608 may be entered into in some cases without children being involved. In many parts of Mexico, both Indian and Mestizo, the *compadrazgo* is an extremely important aspect of social relationships and it has taken on many special localized forms. As yet, the only adequate study of the institution is that made by Spicer for the Arizona Yaqui.⁸⁰

The following account of the *compadrazgo* was written by one of the Tarascan assistants, Pedro Chávez. Additions to the original Chávez manuscript are in parentheses.

[576] The *compadrazgo* is very common among the Tarascans and is highly respected. All *compadres* and *comadres*, when they meet on the street, must salute each other with the phrase "*Buenos días compadre*" (good-day) or "*Buenos días comadre*," or its equivalent in Tarascan "*nájeranku kumbáo* (or *koméri*)."⁸¹ This obligation is especially strong between *comadres* or *compadres de pila*, as are called the *compadres* of baptism of a child. In this case it is obligatory to shake hands in sign of a certain mutual respect the two maintain. (These obligations endure for life, even though the child may have died long since.)

Classes of *compadres*: Among the *compadres* exist the following classes:

1. *Compadres* of baptism.
2. *Compadres* of confirmation.
3. *Compadres* of the crown (*corona*) or circumcision.
4. *Compadres* of marriage.

The degree of mutual respect and appreciation between *compadres* is approximately in the order in which they are given. (It should be noted that there are really two classes of *compadres* of marriage. There are the godparents of the bride and groom, usually a married couple, and the relatives of the bride and groom who become *compadres* as described below.)

608 851 Duties: The main duties are those of *compadres* of baptism. Immediately after the act of baptism (in which the infant is carried to church and the small fee paid by the godparents), they say to each other "*comadre*" or "*compadre*" or "*koméri*" and "*kumbá*," which are the same as the Spanish. This is the first duty and the first occasion it is said. From this arises the duty to care for the godchild, for example, to treat it as nearly like a son as one's resources permit. The godparents have the duty of giving the godchild some kind of clothing, such as a hat, shirt, or trousers, whenever they can afford to do so. This can be done as often as the godfather wishes. The father of the boy or girl has the duty of educating the child, telling him that he has the obligation to speak to the godparents with the words "*pagrínitu*" or "*magrínitu*." (If the godchild dies before the age of 10, the godfather must provide the burial clothing.)

⁸⁰ Spicer, 1944, p. 31 ff.

[p. 103a]

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The *compadres* both have the duty of visiting one another when one of them is sick or has encountered some difficulty and, if it is possible, help him in some form. When one of the *compadres* has a duty (that is, a wedding, funeral, *mayordomía*, house roofing, house moving, or fiesta duty), it is the duty of the other to accompany him as many days as may be necessary. (The same mutual obligation exists between godparents and godchildren.)

When a godson kidnaps a girl with intention of marrying her, it is the duty of the father of the youth, before all else, to go to the house of the godfather of the youth, that is his (the father's) *compadre* and give him the news so that they may present themselves together in the house of the bride. This is a duty of the godfather. This duty (the father) has toward the three godfathers, of baptism, confirmation, and crown.

The duties of the marriage *compadres* are limited solely to accompanying each other when one has some obligation (such as wedding, *mayordomía*, etc.), the moving or termination of a house, and the duty of saluting each other with the name of "*compadre*."

Method of selecting *compadres*. In selecting the *compadres* some of the following characteristics are taken into consideration:

1. When a family wishes to have *compadres*, in general if it is rich it endeavors to find *compadres* in the same category.

2. If the family is poor, it tries to have a *compadre* in its same category, as it has been seen that sometimes when a poor person seeks a rich man as *compadre*, the latter accepts but afterwards he is ashamed to say "*compadre*" to the other who is somewhat poor. For this reason the latter (rich *compadres*) are not common.

3. Many times they (the parents) try to find a *compadre* who knows how to read. They say this is with the object that the infant will also be intelligent and know how to read. This is a belief among many, but it is not universal.

4. On other occasions efforts are made to find a *compadre* who is distinguished as a valiant person, in the sense of having bravery or, better, to be bold to fight when occasion offers—this, in general, indicates what among us is meant when a person is called "valiant"—with the object that the child will grow up and may be equally valiant as his godfather.

5. There are also cases in which a godfather is selected because he has done a favor on some past occasion or because of hope to receive some favor in the future. In general, this is the method of selecting a godfather. All usually try to find their *compadre* in an equal (social) category with these exceptions already noted.

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The marriage *compadres*: In order to recognize one another as *compadres* of marriage, it is necessary to perform a certain act or ceremony in the moments when the last act of the marriage is about to terminate. This act takes place in the house or the kitchen (usually the latter) of the bridegroom. Present are the *tárepiti diow uandari* (marriage manager), the parents

608 of the bride and groom together with all their brothers,
 585 sisters, and first cousins, in short, all the people the
 bride or groom may call aunt or uncle. Only these
 have the right to become *compadres*. Inside the building a mat is spread on the floor. The parents of the
 [516] bride and groom enter first and kneel on the mat, where they remain during the ceremony. The others follow. They also kneel, but before kneeling they embrace one another, saying "In the future you will be my *compadre* (*comadre*) of Heaven and I pray God that we never offend one another. *Buenos tardes, compadre.*" One after the other repeats the same words. Sometimes they are in Tarascan: "Kumbéskari ka suándaju anápueskari ka uéke diósa éskaksa no méni ambé ar-ijperoka. Na éskuskiá kumba." Meantime the *t'aiépi* is iterating that all have the right to be *compadres*, that is to say, the aunts and uncles. (The language used by the marriage manager is not a fixed speech.) When this act is completed, all have the right to call each other *compadres* in the future.

608 To the preceding account a few additions must be made. Relatives may be sought as godparents of a child, especially of baptism, but only rarely is this done. The reason usually is a desire to save money, as between relatives there need be no ceremony or expense. *Compadres* of confirmation are selected to accompany the child to church at the time of confirmation. *Compadres* of the crown or circumcision are normally sought when the child is between the ages of 6 months and 10 years. The child is taken to the image of any saint wearing a crown (the *mayordomía* saints kept at private houses are used, not those of the church), and the godmother places the saint's crown on the child. She says an "Our Father" and burns a candle. When she has finished, she hands the crown to the *mayordomo* or his wife to replace on the saint and pays from 6 to 25 centavos. Normally only one *compadre* of the crown is sought.²¹

[782] In some parts of Mexico—for example, among the Mayo of Sonora—if a child dies, the same godparents are sought for the next child born. The Tarascans are more apt to seek another godparent, believing that the death of the child was from the "luck" of the godparents. Any request to be a godparent may be refused.

[171] In view of the fact that the duties of god-

²¹ In other towns, a godparent of the crown may be sought at any time, especially if a child has been sickly for some time, or merely because the parents like someone. I received requests to be godfather of the crown in other towns where I visited very briefly; I never received a request to be a godfather of any type in Cherán.

608 parents and *compadres* are taken seriously in Cherán, it is obvious from the description given above that the *compadrazgo* obligations are nearly as important as those of kinship, if not more so. Scarcely a person in Cherán does not have at least 10 or 15 *compadres*. Most people have 20 or 25 or more. Don Luís Velasquez, the oldest of the marriage arrangers, who also says prayers at funerals, stated that he had more than 100 *compadres* of baptism alone. When it is considered that usually one acquires most of his *compadres* through weddings, the total number possessed by Don Luís must be enormous. He declined even to make a guess at the number of *compadres* he had of all classes. The obligations of *compadres* of baptism are as great or greater than those of relatives, with the exception of the immediate family (parent-child and possibly sibling obligations), while those of other classes are at least equal to those of cousins.

Some use of the *compadrazgo* is made by the church on special occasions. When a new image is blessed in church, for example, people are invited to become godparents of the image. They kneel behind the image when the priest blesses it. For this they are expected to pay from 1 to 5 pesos. In such cases the participants do not call each other *compadres*, nor do they have any relationship with the owner of the image in case it is a household saint.

GOVERNMENT

632 The governmental system of Cherán on the surface and in its organization is not obviously different from that of any other Michoacán *municipio*. In its functioning, however, it possesses many unconventional features. Even elections, ostentatiously conducted according to legal forms, may actually be conducted very differently beneath the surface.

The major governmental agency is the *ayuntamiento* of five persons and five alternates or *suplentes*. These serve a term of 2 years and are alternated in office, two being elected one year and three the next. Elections are made by *barrio*. Formerly Cheranástico elected one of the five; since this *tenencia* has become associated with Paracho, I could not discover what device was used to elect the fifth member. Whether the situation is still not resolved or whether there was a purposeful vagueness about

[P171b]

Sierra Tarascan

854 regarded as necessary for any other reason,
304 nor are there any beliefs about the operation.

851 The infant is ordinarily baptized between 10
608 days and 2 months after birth. The tendency
in recent years is for the period to lengthen.
Selecting godparents is important, for the care
of the child in the event of death of the parents
may devolve on the godparents, and intimate
relations will exist in any event. For this
reason people will often refuse to accept the
responsibility or do so only after repeated invi-
tations. Normally a married couple are sought
to act as godparents but sometimes an unmar-
ried man serves as godfather. In this case,
when he marries, his wife will automatically
become godmother. More rarely an unmarried
man and unmarried woman are asked to serve
as godparents. Agustín R. acted as godparent
one time and had never met the woman who
served as godmother.

Most commonly the godfather takes the child
to church for baptism unaccompanied by the
godmother, but sometimes the godmother goes
along and carries the child. The godfather
pays the priest the fee for baptism, \$2.50. In
the case of Agustín R., mentioned above, he was
accompanied by his mother who supplied the
information the priest needed to enter the
baptism in the parochial register.

When the godfather returns the child to its
parents, the godmother goes to the house of
the parents for food. She takes with her 2 to
[43] 5 cakes of chocolate, 2 bars of soap to wash the
child, and 3 to 5 pieces of bread worth 10
centavos each. If the godfather is unmarried,
he gives money to some woman to buy these
things and take them to the child's parents.

The parents of the child prepare beef cooked
in broth (čuripo), tamales, tortillas, and some-
times other things. The godmother eats at the
parents' house, and sometimes they invite
others. The godfather cannot eat at the par-
ents' house, but they send food to him at his
own house, which he eats by himself or he may
invite a few of his friends in to help him. In
the case of Agustín, he was sent 2 chickens
cooked in mole sauce, a big pan of rice, a large
basket of tortillas and some tamales. He ate
most of the food by himself, his parents refus-
ing to partake of it.

[p.172a]

Sierra Tarascans

608 The godfather is supposed to supervise the
861 growing up of the child. He should see that his godchild "grows straight like a tree" and is properly trained and clothed, and he should make presents of clothing from time to time and remedy any deficiencies in the parents. Should the parents die, the godfather is responsible for rearing the child.

553 The name is usually selected by the parents.
574 There are four ways of naming a child: using the name of the saint on whose day the child was born; the name of some distinguished person; a name selected by the godfather; the name of some relative, such as the grandparent or sibling of the parents. In the case of persons named for San Juan, San José, San Pedro, San Pablo, or San Francisco there are special observances in connection with their name day throughout the rest of their lives. Early in the morning, people visit persons of these names on their name day; often they will be strangers, for it suffices if one member of the party knows the person. The guests merely say "Good-morning" to the person visited and then are given *posole*. They may then stay around and talk a bit or may leave immediately, merely saying "Thank you" in the ordinary way. Sometimes the band starts at midnight, going around to various persons' houses and playing. In some cases the band members appear to be paid and to come by invitation, but in others they seem merely to be following the usual custom.

Persons with other names are also expected to show hospitality on their name day. When one of the schoolmasters, who is a native of the town but is stingy and not well liked, celebrated his name day, the town officials thought it would be a good joke to invite themselves to his house for dinner and did so. Meeting members of the staff of the study on the street, the mayor and secretary promptly invited them along. As the invitation was not seconded by the rather surly school teacher, who showed considerable signs of distress already, the invitation was not accepted.

[123] Infants are subject to a number of diseases,
751 but there are few special treatments for them.
754 Only the evil eye must be guarded against
854 especially, for it is usually fatal for infants of a year or less. This illness is especially in-

757 sidious as it is usually caused inadvertently,
 754 that is, the person with power to cause the evil
 854 eye does not know it and is apt especially to
 cause it to attack a child that is particularly
 liked or admired by the person. As a preventive a "deer eye" is hung from the neck or wrist, or a little sack filled with cooked black chile, lime, and salt is suspended from the neck. Additional data are given under sickness and curing.

553 In La Cañada the infant's name is said to be
 chosen at a council of the adult relatives who
 ● 608 pick a name from among the deceased relatives,
 851 never the saint's day, as is the case among the
 Mestizos at Chilchota. Neither does the godfather ever choose a name. The godmother presents the parents with a basket of bread, a package of chocolate, 30 centavos of soap, and 1 or 2 kilos of sugar. The other items may vary, but bread and chocolate must be included in the gifts. The parents of the child give the godparents a meal. A year or less after the baptism the godfather takes musicians to the child's house and presents the infant with some clothing. With invited relatives and friends, the godfather holds a day of fiesta. The parents provide atole, *aguardiente*, nacatamales or tamales made with flour. It is to be noted that here the emphasis in choosing godparents is on selecting the proper godmother and that the godfather's personality is of less importance.

853 At Huánsito in La Cañada, infants are fed
 atole, bread or tortillas, bean broth, cooked rice, and similar bland foods, beginning when they are less than a year old. Older children are fed whenever they are hungry and may eat numerous times during the day. Normally a child of 6 years will eat bread or tortillas and black coffee or cinnamon tea in the morning. At 10 o'clock in the morning he will eat tortillas, *curípo*, and perhaps beans with the elders. In the middle of the day he will eat tortillas and some other item (the adults will not eat at this time). In the evening about 6 o'clock will be the main meal, perhaps broiled or fried meat, broth, and beans with tortillas.

553 At Ichán in La Cañada, Rendón noted the practice of children taking the baptismal name of their fathers as their surname. For example, the son of Diego is known as Juan Diego,

[p.174a]

Sierra Tarascans

868 10 they may guide the plow and do other field
 857 work, for short times. By as early an age as
 15, boys may be working for wages. When a
 boy begins to accompany his father and to aid
 in his work, he no longer plays with girls.
 There seems no rule about this, but about this
 time, when a boy is not working, he goes into
 the streets and plays with other boys of his
 own age, while the girl no longer plays outside
 but always stays near her mother unless sent
 on an errand. On rare occasions, if a child is
 [461] disobedient, he may be struck once or twice
 with a rope or switch.

At a little more than 6 or 7 a girl may be
 carrying about a younger child and caring for
 it much of the time. Soon after this she begins
 to grind on the metate, not as a help, but simply
 to learn how. The mother also gets a small
 water jar, and at an early age the girl accom-
 panies her mother to get water. Girls observe
 the mother in the kitchen and gradually begin
 to take part in the activities. By the age of 8
 a girl may be going alone to the mill with maize.
 If disobedient, girls may be punished in the
 same way as boys. In general, it is the opinion
 in Cherán, and this was borne out by all obser-
 vations, there is very little disobedience or
 punishment at this time and the relations be-
 [593] tween father and son and mother and daughter
 are close and affectionate once the child begins
 active participation in the adult activities.
 The period of conflict, then, seems a rather
 limited one, between the time when a child is
 no longer carried about and the time when it
 begins to participate in the adult life. These
 remarks again are based on very inadequate
 data and observation.

852 Some time between the ages of 6 and 10,
 869 usually toward the upper limits of the age
 608 period, the child is usually confirmed. There
 is very little ceremony involved, but when a
 visit from the Bishop is expected there will be
 a period of some weeks beforehand when chil-
 dren will be instructed and adults will confess
 so they may receive communion. For the event
 a new pair of godparents is sought. These
 godparents in theory assume the same responsi-
 bility as do the godparents of baptism. Actually
 the bonds seem to be much less close and the
 duties much less.

583 refused, as he was interested in the girl he had hoped to steal the previous Sunday and the present girl he knew visited one of the houses of assignation. José was then put in jail, but when his mother stood responsible for him he was let out in a couple of days. The girl's mother went around town talking about the wrong that had been done, while José went around town telling everyone bad things about the girl. Eventually José had to run away and no one knew where he had gone.

Normally, sexual relations are begun between the bride and groom soon after she is stolen.

● [608] Permission of the girl's baptismal godfather (and perhaps the godfather of confirmation) should be sought and is usually given; to refuse might cause hard feeling. Cases were cited where the godfather and the boy's parents became very angry with each other over a refusal. On the other hand, evidently the boy is stimulated to accumulate the property necessary to hold the wedding if sex relations are not permitted.

The stealing of a girl sets in motion a complex series of events constituting perhaps the most complicated aspect of Cherán culture.

The following account of marriage is one written by Pedro Chávez. Parts in brackets represent additional comments made by Sr. Chávez on other occasions or data gathered from other sources. All the features of the wedding were verified by observation and utilization of other sources of information.

A TARASCAN WEDDING

Marriage among the Tarascans of the town of Cherán embraces many points of great importance. In the first place, it is now a custom that the groom, when he desires to enter into marriage, steals the girl. This theft consists of catching her and carrying her off forcibly or, sometimes, willingly without force. But in either case, as much in the first instance as in the second, the bride goes in accordance with an agreement made in advance and the action is merely feigned by the two.

585 When the theft of the bride is completed [by taking the girl to the house of an uncle or other relative or, more rarely, to the house of the groom], the parents of the groom proceed to the house of the bride and appear before her parents. This act is called the puátperankua or "the pardon." It should be taken into account that in order to present themselves before the parents of the bride, the parents of the groom must take a person called t'aepiti díg'a uandári [who is a professional

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articles. When the bride is dressed [she wears all three of the new rebosos], the parents of the couple and the principal godparents and relatives, together with the musicians brought by the parents of the groom, accompany the couple to the church to effectuate the marriage before the priest. [During the Mass a ring is placed on a finger of the bride. The groom can bring his own ring, but if he has not done so, a ring lent by the priest is used. The priest also puts silver money in the hands of the groom who in turn places it in the hands of the bride. If the groom has not brought money, the priest lends it to him. However, it is believed that the groom should bring the money and that the more he brings the greater the benediction for their life and the more fortunate the couple will be. There is said to be no use of the collar, chain, or ribbon used in some churches in Oaxaca.]

After the wedding, all leave the Mass and go to the house of the bride's parents, where she and all her relatives are left, the rest of the party going to the house of the groom's parents. Later, in about an hour, all return to the house of the bride's father [first calling for the bride's godparents to invite them] to escort the bride and all her relatives to breakfast [at the house of the groom's father] which consists only of a piece of bread and small cup of chocolate. On arriving at the house of the groom's father, the [male] guests seat themselves in a place previously prepared. The preparation consists of placing some logs of wood for seats [in two rows with others sometimes arranged as a table between the rows at a somewhat higher level] and at one of the ends they place the image of some saint of the Catholic religion [most commonly a picture of the saint] before which is a lighted candle and flowers [and sometimes an incense burner with copal incense]. Before the guests are served, it is the duty of the marriage manager to say a prayer in thanks. It should be noted that the first places [before the altar] are reserved for the marriage manager and the godfathers of both bride and groom and that only the men sit on these seats, the women being seated apart. The godmothers also sit apart [usually on mats in the center of the courtyard], the godmother of the groom being distinguished by ribbons tied in her hair. These ribbons are given and tied on the hair by the godmother's *comadres*, granddaughters and sisters-in-law. [Ribbons are tied in the hair of all the godmothers of the groom, and of the godmother of the wedding.]

[608]

[554]

Upon completing the breakfast, all the relatives of the bride return to her house, taking the bride with them again and not being accompanied by the relatives of the groom. In the meantime the musicians play in the house of the groom. This is usually between 10 and 11 of the morning. [Meantime many guests may drop in and will be fed, being seated in a different place from the relatives. Everyone is welcome because the more who attend, the more prestige attaches to the wedding. As outsiders, the members of the staff were usually especially welcome, as apparently we gave special *ecolat* to the function.] Meantime all the sib-

585 The exchange of clothing for bread now began. The father and mother of the groom were the object of most attention and every effort was made to keep giving them clothing too rapidly for them to remove it. Each donor placed the garment on the recipient. Occasionally the father would succeed in getting away and dash into the house where he would remove it all. Despite this, at one time he wore about six shirts and four or five pairs of extra *calzones* (trousers). Three or four times during this procedure, the groom came hastily into the courtyard and entered the house to leave the bags (*morales*) and tortilla cloths he had been given.

After some exchange had gone on and part of the repayment in bread had been accomplished, a group brought in seven more large baskets of bread. Some of the older women accompanying the party brought breads made in the shape of bulls. They rushed about holding the breads between their two hands and pretended to gore others until other women finally seized them and broke them to pieces. These breads in the form of bulls (and sometimes other animals) [532] are provided by the grandparents of the groom but are used only in the period from January until after Carnival according to some informants. However, this was August, so the informants must have been in error.

Before the exchange of clothing and bread was completed, the godmothers began the dancing. No one was supposed to dance until 535 the godmothers began. All the early dancers 608 were women, mostly elderly, dancing by themselves or in pairs. When the music began to play for a second dance, elderly women with more breads in the shape of bulls began running at various persons standing around and pretending to gore them with the animal until they began to dance.

The dancing was interrupted at this point 585 by the eruption of a group of men and women into the courtyard carrying baskets, cooking pots, *comals*, water buckets, etc. Two men carried on a pole a huge copper pot in which [482] tamales had been cooked. This group began to dance and everyone cleared a place, primarily because the pots were black. After a time the dancers began to wipe their hands on the sooty

- 342 weddings, funerals, and *mayordomías*. In the latter type of ceremony, the image of a saint is kept in the house for a year. However, as the use of the house is incidental in all these cases, the ceremonies will not be described. It may be noted, however, that probably the image of a saint would not be entrusted to a family unless it had adequate housing for it. Another special feature in connection with weddings is also worth mentioning. The most important ceremonial directly associated with a structure takes place, not in the house, but in the kitchen. This is a ceremony where all the close relatives of the bride and groom enter into the relationship of the *compadrazgo*, that is, they assume the relationship of godparents to each others' children.
- [608]

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

- 342 The house is involved in a number of social usages and obligations. As a piece of moveable property, it may be sold or inherited independently of the land on which it stands. Sale or inheritance follows the same rules as exist for other property, however. As these rules will be treated in another paper, they will not be repeated here.

- Residence rules operate with respect to houses.
- 591 Normally, after marriage, the bride and groom live for a time in the house of the groom's father. This may continue for several years, but, usually after the birth of a child, if not before, an effort will be made to establish the son in a house of his own. This may be done merely by erecting a separate kitchen for the new household. Ideally, however, the son will have a lot, house, and kitchen of his own. In exceptional cases, however, the family remains as a unit until the death of the father. All the sons live on the same lot, and the father directs economic activities and controls the family treasury. Such a household is said always to separate after the death of the father.

- 651 Ownership of a house entails numerous community obligations. A house owner, first of all, must pay taxes to the Federal Government through the local tax office. A percentage of these taxes goes to the municipal government also. The house owner is responsible for the repair and cleaning of the street in front of his property. This is not strictly enforced; only street cleaning is demanded and this ordinarily

612 more nuclear or bilaterally expanded families enjoying the usufruct of an ejidal plot,
423 five acres of black soil. Such families are corporate, "nonunilineal" descent groups,
66 with a locus of authority, which trace descent bilaterally from a common older relative who first acquired the plot (Goodenough, 1955). Almost all of the 218 ejidal plots are controlled by such families. They act as a block in politics and are represented by one head who votes at ejidal meetings.² The representatives of such ejidal families also dominate in the civil government since they include more than half the politically active nuclear families and, as a group, also possess the overwhelming mass of the community's wealth in private land. Occasionally a majority at an ejidal meeting will oppose the cacical authority.

592 The household, the third bilateral structure, includes one or more nuclear or bilaterally expanded families living in one or more adobe houses around one backyard. The majority of households contain ejidal families. The male members of a household, welded together by shared domestic and agricultural experiences, support each other during the ongoing political schisms and realignments; the members of a household operate as a block, which, unlike the nuclear family, can be divided by situational determinants.

612 The bilateral kindred also has a political function. Certain members of an individual's
66 bilateral kindred, especially ambilateral uncles and nephews, and first cousins, are selected through the interaction of certain variables, such as ward residence. They function, among other things, as a politically supporting nucleus around every individual. The first agrarian cacique, for example, was principally supported by six first and second cousins, and the principal bastions of the present-day cacique are five (six till 1954) second- and third-degree nephews. In critical political situations this kindred stands firm.

621 A final type of bilateral structure divides the community into five large and several
612 minor political "families," each with a core of ten to thirty men sharing a patronymic,
66 plus a much larger associated group related to the core through blood and marriage, or simply affiliated through choice. Though the principles of alignment to these groups are numerous and flexible, all politically active men at any time belong to just one "family," and politics is conceived of by the villagers as struggles between such "families." They are the maximal political blocks within the village. A major event in Durazno political history was the exodus in 1935 of over thirty nuclear families belonging to one huge political "family." Informal political organization in the community is thus largely a special function of various bilateral kinship structures. These structures also partially define the structure of the cacicazgo itself. The cacique and his principal followers are each the focus of overlapping nuclear and ejidal families and bilateral kindreds, and they all belong to one of the large political "families."

608 Two other primary relations possess important political functions: ceremonial kinship
66 and friendship. Ceremonial kinship is the compadre relationship between parents and godparents, formed on the occasion of baptism. The tie is stronger than that obtaining between first cousins and analogous to that of siblings. The compadre bond surrounds every adult male with four to seven trusted and loyal age mates with whom he has grown up and who are usually his social equals in this "horizontal system" (Mints and Wolf, 1950). A political leader planning an assassination must reckon with the automatic if not immediate retaliation by some of his victim's compadres. Since good "fighters" tend to be related as compadres, a homicidal act against one of them may unleash a swift counterattack. In 1939 two gunmen who unsuccessfully ambushed a leader of the ruling faction were hunted down and shot to death within three hours by the friends and compadres of their victim. Individuals tend to vote and to ally themselves politically

with their compadres. On the other hand, intense political factionalism may lead directly to a rupture of these "quasi-sibling" bonds; one case of politically motivated homicide between compadres is actually on record (1944).

The compadre tie also has the special function of relating the kinship nucleus of the cacicazgo outward to other leaders, and of relating some of the leaders to each other and to apolitical members of the village. The strength of a cacical system depends in part on the size of its ceremonial kinship ties, as it does on the size of the bilateral structures previously mentioned. Ceremonial kinship, like friendship, also links a few leaders, especially the cacique, sideward and upward to politicians in other villages and in higher informal structures. The institution of ceremonial kinship provides a unique form of intra- and extracommunal integration for this Tarascan cacicazgo.

The last primary relation, that of intimate friendship, is an informal bond of mutual confidence and support, an "informal design" (Kluckhohn, 1945, p. 98), relating the average Indian to about six other men. Friendship is highly selective and jealousy-ridden. It is more flexible than the compadre bond or the nuclear family ties, but like them has important and partially unique political functions. Friendship, first of all, creates another set of political blocks of which each man is a unique focus. Second, friendship surrounds the cacical nucleus with a network of individuals who at any given time may occupy most of the formal offices, while the cacique and his relatives remain in the background. Two of the present cacique's nephews, for example, have never held any formal local office. Friendship also functions to relate major and minor leaders to each other. Sociometric analysis has revealed that almost all the "intimate friends" of the leaders are themselves leaders, forming a group that is directed inward toward itself in this respect.

Friendship is especially important in the Durazno cacicazgo because of the tendency of leaders in such an authoritarian system to become isolated through the traditional and automatic hostility felt toward a person in their status. Such leaders, feeling a need for support, may acquire up to eight or nine close friends. On the other hand, the powerful present-day cacique is a sociometric isolate within the village; most of his friends and compadres live in other parts of the state. This indicates the undemocratic character of his control. All caciques have a number of loyal followers who are neither friends nor relatives but who remain fairly true because of self-interest, fear, or other types of highly personal and deeply ingrained traits.

The quasi-sibling structures of ceremonial kinship and friendship combine with those of natural siblings to form for every individual a horizontal tier the sections of which have definite and partially distinctive political functions. The three horizontal blocks of this tier, while largely discrete for any individual--the "compadrazgo of intensification" being very rare (Paul, 1942)--overlap and intersect as we move from individual to individual. They produce a complicated network of political relations. Numerous oblique sibling and quasi-sibling ties, and the godparent-godchild tie, combine to form a continuum of relations through the generations. Every adult individual is likewise the focus of two interlocking nuclear families and of the three bilateral structures described above--the ejidal family, the household, and the bilateral kindred. These nuclear bilateral and horizontal structures intermesh with one another and with those of other individuals to form the political reticulum of Durazno.

Thus the informal morphology of the Durazno cacicazgo is a special concatenation of structural units found in all parts of the village culture. These structures have general political functions, such as the absolute loyalty of siblings, and also political functions particular to the cacicazgo, such as the way "intimate friendship" relates leaders to each other. The informal structure of the Durazno cacicazgo can thus be described